

COUNTRY PROFILE: HAITI

December 2005

COUNTRY

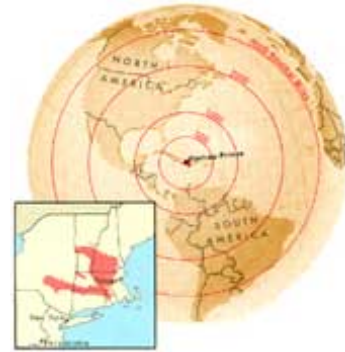
Formal Name: Republic of Haiti (République d'Haïti).

Short Form: Haiti.

Term for Citizens: Haitian(s).

Capital: Port-au-Prince.

Major Cities: Port-au-Prince (917,112 inhabitants), Carrefour (306,074), Delmas (257,247), and Cap-Haïtien (107,026) are Haiti's only cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants.



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Independence: On January 1, 1804, Haiti became the first free black republic in the world. Haiti won its independence from France through the only successful countrywide slave insurrection in history.

Public Holidays: Haiti celebrates the following public holidays: Independence Day (January 1), Ancestors' Day (January 2), Carnival Monday (variable date in February or March), Mardi Gras (variable date in February or March), Ash Wednesday (variable date in February or March), Good Friday (variable date in March or April, Friday before Easter), Easter (variable date in March or April), Flag Day (May 18), Ascension Day (variable date in May or June), Corpus Christi Day (variable date in May or June), Assumption Day (August 15), Dessalines Day (October 17), All Saints' Day (November 1), All Souls' Day (November 2), Christmas Day (December 25).

Flag: Haiti's flag consists of two equal horizontal bands, the top blue and the bottom red. Centered is a white rectangle that bears Haiti's coat of arms, which consists of a palm tree and two cannons underscored by the motto "L'UNION FAIT LA FORCE" (Union Makes Strength).



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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Early History: Haiti has a uniquely tragic history. Colonialism, slavery, natural disasters, and revolution have plagued the small country since Christopher Columbus landed on its shores in 1492. Before the arrival of Europeans, indigenous Arawaks (also known as Taino) flourished on the island. Although researchers debate the total pre-Columbus population of the Arawaks (estimates range from 60,000 to 600,000), the detrimental impact of colonization is well

documented. Disease and brutal labor practices nearly decimated the Indian population within 50 years.

Spain ceded the western third of the island of Hispaniola, or Santo Domingo as it became known under Spanish control, to France in 1697. French authorities quelled the island's buccaneer activity and focused on agricultural growth. Soon, French adventurers began to settle the colony, turning the French portion of the island, renamed Saint-Domingue, into a coffee- and sugar-producing juggernaut. By the 1780s, nearly 40 percent of all the sugar imported by Britain and France and 60 percent of the world's coffee came from the small colony. Known as the "pearl of the Antilles," Saint-Domingue annually created more wealth than the entire United States and more than the rest of the West Indies combined.

As the indigenous population dwindled, slaves became vital to Saint-Domingue's economic development. Slaves arrived by the tens of thousands as coffee and sugar production boomed. Under colonial rule, nearly 800,000 slaves arrived from Africa, accounting for a third of the entire Atlantic slave trade. Many died from disease and the brutal conditions of the sugar and coffee plantations. Statistics show that there was a complete turnover in the slave population every 20 years. Still, by 1789 slaves outnumbered the ruling white population 4 to 1—452,000 slaves in a population of 520,000. The island was ripe for revolution, and marauding bands of slaves became increasingly common.

In 1791 Toussaint Louverture emerged as the leader of an organized and widespread slave rebellion that finally toppled the French colony. Toussaint, an educated slave who had studied the military campaigns of Julius Caesar, led a massive revolt of former slaves that began in the northern region and eventually spread across the entire island. A temporary truce occurred between France and Toussaint's army, but the political rights it afforded the former slaves were not enough to stop the fighting for long. As the death toll rose, French General Donatien Rochambeau reportedly informed Napoleon Bonaparte that the only way France could win would be to kill everyone in Saint-Domingue over the age of 12. Ultimately, the resumption of war in Europe led France to surrender in November 1803. After 300 years of colonial control, Haiti emerged as a free, black republic.

In an effort to establish cohesion, Haiti's first constitution, put forth by General Jean-Jacques Dessalines, required that all Haitian citizens be classified as "black." Unfortunately, this strategy failed to eliminate ethnic tensions. Dessalines ordered the killing of all remaining French settlers. Haiti's black and mulatto population, reduced from 480,000 in 1789 to only 250,000 in 1804, faced severe economic challenges. The plantation system lay in ruins. After becoming governor general for life and then crowning himself emperor, Dessalines was assassinated in October 1806. This act marked the beginning of Haiti's chronic instability.

Civil war divided Haiti into two distinct regions, the north ruled by Henry Christophe, a black, who crowned himself King Henry I, and the south by Alexandre Pétion, a mulatto. A protégé of Toussaint, Christophe wanted to restore the sugar plantation economy and reestablish international trade. By contrast, Pétion pushed for land reform in the south and established a region dominated by small family farms. Popularly known as "Father Good Heart," Pétion created a benevolent society that attracted significant migration from the harsher conditions of

the north. In 1820, following the death of both Christophe and Pétion, southern forces led by General Jean-Pierre Boyer, a mulatto, invaded the north and reunited the country. Upon taking power, Boyer worried incessantly about foreign invasion. Under his administration, noteworthy for its length, Haiti healed its sectional divide but concurrently witnessed the hardening of class and race divisions. Boyer served as Haiti's president until being overthrown in 1843.

Instability: Between 1843 and 1915, Haiti had 22 different presidents—with only a handful of peaceful successions. Economic stagnation plagued the country, as rulers repeatedly subdivided agricultural lands, causing yields to plummet. Additionally, when in 1843 France had agreed to give up all claims to Haiti, it negotiated an indemnity payment of 150 million francs as well as preferred tariff rates. The indemnity dragged down Haiti's struggling economy. Political solutions rarely overcame the deep-seated hostility between blacks and mulattoes. Elite mulattoes, for the most part, either held the presidency or managed to install puppet black presidents who served their interests.

Coups and assassinations became commonplace. One president died when the presidential palace exploded, another was hacked to pieces by an angry mob, and a third was poisoned. In the midst of this political chaos, only three Haitian presidents enjoyed relatively stable and progressive tenures. General Nicholas Geffrard (1859–67), during a generally peaceful and progressive administration, succeeded in gaining recognition for Haiti from the United States in 1862. Louis Lysius Félicité Salomon (1879–88) made populist reforms and established a national bank, telegraph system, and rural school system. Florvil Hyppolite (1889–96) created the Ministry of Public Works, which built much needed bridges, docks, and public buildings throughout the country.

United States Occupation, 1915–34: After years of turmoil, the brutal killing of President Vilbrun Guillaume Sam, who had ordered the execution of 167 political prisoners, proved to be the last straw for U.S. officials. On July 28, 1915, U.S. Marines invaded Haiti to protect U.S. financial interests and citizens. By this time, U.S. companies controlled most of Haiti's banking and the railroad industry, and the U.S. Navy already had used force 26 times to extract debt payments from Haitian banks. Rather than striking and then receding as had previously been the case, the U.S. military came to stay in 1915. Marines seized control of the country, disbanding the Haitian military and installing Phillippe Sudre Dartiguenave, an elite mulatto, as president (1915–22). During its occupation, the United States amended the Haitian constitution, stabilized the economy, and made improvements in infrastructure. U.S. Marines also created the Garde d'Haïti, a security unit that harassed and even killed opponents of the occupation.

New Independence: In 1930 the U.S. Marines allowed Haiti to resume free elections. The winner, Sténio Vincent (1930–41), was a former senator with populist tendencies, and his election set Haiti on the path to reestablishing its autonomy. Vincent engaged in an ambitious program of infrastructure improvement, while insisting that the U.S. Marines end their active occupation. As a show of nationalism, he insisted on making his state addresses in Creole, rather than in French. Like many of his predecessors, however, Vincent also resorted to using the presidency to increase his own wealth and power. In 1935 he pushed through the Haitian Congress a new constitution that allowed the president to disband the legislature and reorganize

the judiciary. Ultimately, Vincent succeeded in reestablishing Haiti's independence, but he also strengthened the country's legacy of dictatorial leadership.

After the ineffective administration of Élie Lescot (1941–45), which installed mulattoes in virtually every post of the government, black voters turned out en masse and elected a sympathetic National Assembly. Additionally, after years of mulatto rule, the 1946 presidential election, often referred to as the Revolution of 1946, was contested by three black candidates. Dumarsais Estimé (1946–50) won the election, garnering especially strong support from the emerging middle class of blacks in the northern region of the country. Colonel Paul Magloire followed Estimé in 1950 and held the presidency for six corrupt, if stable, years.

The Duvalier Era: François Duvalier (1957–71) won a suspiciously large victory in the presidential election of 1957. Duvalier came from a modest black family in Port-au-Prince. His platform consisted of pro-black nationalism, strong support from the military, and state acceptance of the voodoo religion. The army disqualified Duvalier's most popular rival, Daniel Fignolé, and likely tampered with ballots. Amidst the controversy, Duvalier officially assumed the presidency in 1957, backed by a majority in both houses of the legislature.

As a candidate for office, Duvalier had been known as “Papa Doc” because of his paternalistic concern for poor and sick Haitians. During his 14-year reign, however, Duvalier focused more on controlling his people than caring for them. His dictatorial methods were harsh even by Haiti's standards. In 1961 he discarded the bicameral legislature in favor of a unicameral one, and then secured for himself the title of president for life. In order to control the military, Duvalier frequently shuffled the leadership, bringing young black soldiers to command positions until they too became threatening to the administration. Duvalier also created the Presidential Guard and the Volunteers for National Security (Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale—VSN), or *makout* as they were known, for the express purpose of averting attempted coups. The VSN functioned as a secret, paramilitary group, using blackmail and terror to control Haiti's citizenry.

Largely through his brutal tactics, Duvalier held the presidency until his natural death in 1971. His son, Jean-Claude (1971–86), assumed leadership of Haiti at the age of 19. After initially deferring to his ambitious mother, Jean-Claude, referred to as “Baby Doc,” adopted many of his father's leadership tactics. He lived lavishly, siphoning off funds from the governmentally controlled tobacco industry, while Haiti descended further into poverty. The administration relied heavily on intimidation to maintain power. A visit from Pope John Paul II on March 9, 1983, saw the pope echoing the people's cries for improved access to food, water, education, and employment. It proved to be the beginning of the end for Jean-Claude. On February 7, 1986, Haitian citizens revolted against the corruption-rife administration. Threatened by rioting crowds and pressured by the United States, Duvalier gave up the presidency and fled Haiti.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Military Coups, and the Fight for Democracy: Duvalier had hastily named a National Council of Government (Conseil National de Gouvernement—CNG) to serve as an interim government. It proved to be his final corruptive blow to Haitian development. Although the CNG initially dismantled some vestiges of the Duvalier era, it too eventually slipped into the mode of repressive governance. Political chaos ensued. Brigadier General Prosper Avril assumed the presidency in September 1988 and ruled for two tumultuous years

before a wave of assassinations and widespread public protest led to his resignation on March 12, 1990. Finally, following Avril's departure, an independent Permanent Electoral Council was formed, and the council announced an election for December 16, 1990.

Despite swirling violence, Haiti's presidential election of December 1990 proved to be a landmark occurrence. A team of international observers, led by former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, declared the election peaceful and legitimate. Outspoken anti-Duvalierist and former Roman Catholic priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide won a landslide victory, claiming nearly 75 percent of the vote. After surviving an attempted coup even before his inauguration, Aristide pledged to rid Haiti of the ethnic, racial, and economic hierarchy that had defined the country. In his first seven months in office, Aristide cut military corruption, drug trafficking, and human rights abuses. He also balanced the federal budget for the first time in decades.

In the midst of these reforms, however, tensions mounted between the Aristide administration and military leaders. After several halting starts, a military coup, led by Brigadier General Raoul Cédras, erupted on September 29, 1991. The following day, rebels captured Aristide and forced him from the country. A military leadership council, referred to as the junta, seized control of the Haitian government. The revolt did not have widespread popular support. In fact, many civilians opposed the military's actions and the newly installed president (Joseph Nérette) but were powerless to fight the army. Foreign criticism came swiftly. The United States condemned the coup leaders and pledged to see Aristide restored to office. Additionally, the United Nations (UN) Security Council refused to recognize Haiti's new leaders.

In June 1993, after failed negotiations, the UN imposed a worldwide fuel and arms embargo on Haiti. The United States stopped all commercial flights to the island and urged U.S. citizens to evacuate. When these measures failed to break the hold of the junta, the UN Security Council passed a resolution to raise a multinational force to restore civil authority in Haiti. Only with a United States-led military invasion looming did the junta agree to step down in return for amnesty for themselves and the rest of the army. On September 9, 1994, U.S. troops entered Haiti peacefully and unopposed. On October 15, 1994, President Aristide addressed a jubilant crowd, becoming the first exiled Haitian president to be restored to power.

Political Chaos: In 1995 Aristide completed his term, and Haiti had its first successful transition between two democratically elected presidents. Unfortunately, Aristide's successor, Rene Préval (1996–2000), proved unable to overcome partisan rancor. Almost complete governmental gridlock led Préval to dismiss members of the legislature and rule exclusively by presidential decree. So low was the confidence in Haiti's government that only 5 percent of the electorate voted in the 2000 presidential election, which returned the still-popular Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power. Aristide's second tenure as president was only slightly less chaotic than the first. Economically, Haiti plunged further into widespread poverty. Political fighting between Aristide's political party, Lavalas Family (Fanmi Lavalas—FL), a Creole phrase meaning "cleansing flood," and the opposition party, Democratic Convergence (Convergence Démocratique—CD), repeatedly broke into violence and the suppression of human rights. Pro-Aristide gangs attacked opposition leaders. Armed opposition armies struck back. By February 2004, rebels controlled many of the country's towns and had moved within 40 kilometers of the capital. With no alternative, Aristide resigned the presidency. Boniface Alexandre, president of

Haiti's Supreme Court, assumed the presidency in accordance with the constitution. UN peacekeeping forces descended on the island to protect Haitian citizens from marauding armed gangs, but so far stability has proved fleeting.

GEOGRAPHY

Location: Haiti occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola, which is situated in the Caribbean between Cuba and Puerto Rico. The Dominican Republic occupies the remainder of the island. The Atlantic Ocean borders Haiti's northern shores, while the Caribbean Sea is to the west and south. The Windward Passage separates Haiti from Cuba, which lies about 80 kilometers to the northwest.



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Size: Haiti occupies 27,750 square kilometers of land, making it approximately the same size as the state of Maryland.

Land Boundaries: Haiti shares a 360-kilometer border with the Dominican Republic to the east.

Disputed Territory: Traditional conflicts with the Dominican Republic over the border have been largely settled. The Protocol of Revision of 1936 set the present border.

Length of Coastline: Because of its horseshoe shape, Haiti has a disproportionately long coastline. In all, Haiti's coastline stretches 1,771 kilometers, with prominent peninsulas in both the north and the south.

Maritime Claims: Haiti's claims a territorial sea of 12 nautical miles, a contiguous zone of 24 nautical miles, an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles, and a continental shelf to the depth of exploitation.

Topography: Haiti occupies the mountainous portion of the island of Hispaniola. Its land area includes numerous small islands as well as four large islands: Île de la Gonâve in the west, Île de la Tortue off the north coast, and Île à Vache and Grande Cayemite, situated, respectively, south and north of the southern peninsula. Five mountain ranges dominate Haiti's landscape and divide the country into three regions—northern, central, and southern. Slopes of more than a 20 percent grade cover nearly two-thirds of the country. Plains constitute only about 20 percent of Haiti's land, making cultivation difficult.

The northern region has the country's largest coastal plain, the Plaine du Nord, which covers an area of 2,000 square kilometers. The north's major mountain range, the Massif du Nord, buttresses this plain. The central region consists of the Central Plateau, which covers an area more than 2,500 square kilometers, as well as two smaller plains and three mountain ranges. The Guayamouc River splits the Central Plateau and provides some of the country's most fertile soil. Haiti's southern region contains a series of small coastal plains as well as the mountains of the

Massif de la Selle. It contains Haiti's highest point—Montagne Terrible, 2,684 meters—and the Plaine du Cul-de-Sac, which is a natural depression 12 kilometers wide and 32 kilometers wide.

Principal Rivers: Haiti's rivers often overflow during the rainy season and conversely slow to a trickle during the dry season. Five rivers provide most of the country's catchment: the Artibonite, Grand-Anse, L'Estère, Trois Rivières, and Cavaillon. The Artibonite is the country's dominant drainage system and was dammed in 1956 to create Lac de Péligre. The Libon River, which feeds into the Artibonite, forms part of Haiti's border with the Dominican Republic and also provides the country with most of its electricity—through the Péligre Dam, Haiti's major hydroelectric facility. In addition to rivers, the country's mountainous terrain also has created a series of short and swift streams, running between mountain ridges.

Climate: Haiti has a tropical climate with distinct dry and wet seasons—the former from December to February and the latter between April and November. The eastern region of the country is the exception to the tropical climate. Mountains block trade winds there, creating a semiarid climate. Rainfall varies considerably. In the northwest, rainfall averages about 300 millimeters annually while the southwestern mountains receive more than 3,000 millimeters of rain each year. In terms of temperature, the coastal regions enjoy averages near 27° C with only minor variations throughout the year. By contrast, the mountainous regions regularly experience fronts during the winter months. Because of the northeast trade winds, the entire country periodically faces extreme weather conditions. Haitians must contend with hurricanes, droughts, floods, and other natural disasters.

Natural Resources: Haiti has limited natural resources because of its relatively small land area and environmental degradation. Of Haiti's natural resources, wood may be the most vital. Mangrove forests cover about 180 square kilometers of Haiti's coastal areas. This valuable wood resource, however, is in decline as a result of overuse. In addition to wood, Haiti has some mineral deposits, including bauxite, copper, gold, and lignite. Known deposits of high-grade calcium carbonate exist but have yet to be mined. Haiti has numerous sites where construction materials—such as gravel, limestone, clay, and sand—can be gathered. Haiti's rivers give the country access to hydropower, but the fluctuating water volumes make harnessing this resource more difficult.

Land Use: By agronomic standards, the majority of Haiti's land (63 percent) is too steep for agricultural production. Despite this fact, nearly 80 percent of the country's area functions, at least temporarily, as agricultural land. These less than ideal conditions make yields low and stability difficult. Only 11 percent of the land is used for permanent crops. Irrigation is limited, and the government's recent commitment to irrigating 40,000 hectares within five years was called off with only 5,600 hectares improved. Mountains take up a significant portion of the country, and concentrated urban areas house most of the country's population.

Environmental Factors: Haiti faces a severe deforestation problem. In 1923 forests covered nearly 60 percent of the country; today they cover less than 2 percent. Until recently the government had done little to combat this problem. Because most Haitians still depend on wood and charcoal as their primary fuel source, energy alternatives are needed to save the forests. The 15-year Environment Action Plan, authorized in 1999, proposed to stop deforestation by

developing alternative fuel sources. So far, however, political instability and lack of funding have limited the impact of this reform effort. Deforestation has led to soil erosion, which has decreased agricultural yields and resulted in deadly landslides.

Urban environments suffer from a lack of sanitation. Vast slum areas, especially in the capital, Port-au-Prince, are filled with people living in squalid, unsanitary conditions.

Time Zone: Haiti operates five hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

SOCIETY

Population: In 2005 Haiti had an estimated population of 8.1 million, with an annual growth rate of about 2.2 percent. Haiti is the western hemisphere's second most densely populated country (248 persons per square kilometer), trailing only Barbados. About 1.5 million citizens live in the capital and its surrounding districts. Most of the population, however, lives in small cities. In total, Haiti has only four cities with more than 100,000 residents. All population growth has come from childbearing, as Haiti's net migration rate stands at -1.7 migrants per 1,000 population. Population statistics remain difficult to gather because of widespread emigration and the periodic exodus of political refugees in the midst of regime change. Thousands of Haitians in recent years have attempted to reach the shores of the United States, often on handmade seacraft.

Demography: Haiti has extremely low life expectancy—about 53 years in 2005 (51.6 years for males and 54.3 years for females). Haiti had an estimated birthrate of 36.6 births per 1,000 population and a death rate of 12.3 deaths per 1,000 population in 2005. Haiti's death rate ranks as the worst in the western hemisphere, as does its 2005 infant mortality rate of 73.5 deaths per 1,000 live births. In terms of gender, slightly more boys than girls are born in Haiti (1.03 males per female), but because of war, working hardships, and sickness, the total population has fewer males (0.97 males per female) than females. Haitian women have an average of five children. Most of Haiti's population is under the age of 65. The country's median age is 18. Nearly 43 percent of the population is 14 or younger; 54 percent is 15 to 64 years of age.

Ethnic Groups and Languages: Nearly all of Haiti's population (95 percent) is of African ancestry. The remaining 5 percent of the population is mulatto or white. The origin of the black population in Haiti can be traced back to the colonial slave trade, when Haiti's thriving sugar plantations needed thousands of slave laborers. French and Creole are Haiti's official languages.

Religion: About 80 percent of Haitians belong to the Roman Catholic faith. Many, however, mix Catholicism with traditional voodoo practices. Roughly half the population still practices voodoo. About 16 percent of the population identifies itself as Protestant, with the Baptist denomination being the largest.

Education and Literacy: Education standards in Haiti are extremely low. Haiti's literacy rate of about 53 percent (55 percent for males and 51 percent for females) falls well below the 90 percent average literacy rate for Latin American and Caribbean countries. Under President Aristide, some improvements have occurred. In 1997 the government passed a 10-year education

plan, with the goal of universal access to quality schools. The national education budget increased from 9 percent of the national budget in 1997 to 22 percent in 2000, which paid for programs to provide school lunches, uniforms, and bus transportation. Additionally, in 2002 the government began a literacy campaign, facilitated by 30,000 literacy monitors and the distribution of 700,000 literacy manuals. Overall, school attendance rose from 20 percent in 1994 to 64 percent in 2000. Even with these improvements, however, the country still faces severe shortages in educational supplies and qualified teachers, and the rural population remains vastly underrepresented in the country's classrooms. Currently, most Haitian schools are private rather than state-funded. International private schools (run by Canada, France, or the United States) and church-run schools educate 90 percent of students.

Health: Deficient sanitation systems, poor nutrition, and inadequate health services have pushed Haiti to the bottom of the World Bank's rankings of health indicators. According to the United Nations World Food Programme, 80 percent of Haiti's population lives below the poverty line. Consequently, malnutrition is a significant problem. Half the population can be categorized as "food insecure," and half of all Haitian children are undersized as a result of malnutrition. Less than half the population has access to clean drinking water, a rate that pales even in comparison to other less developed nations. Haiti's healthy life expectancy at birth is only 44 years. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that only 43 percent of the target population receives the recommended immunizations.

In terms of health care spending, Haiti ranks last in the western hemisphere. Economic instability has limited any growth in this area. Per capita, Haiti spends about US\$83 annually on health care. There are 25 physicians and 11 nurses per 100,000 population. Only one-fourth of births are attended by a skilled health professional. Most rural areas have no access to health care, making residents susceptible to otherwise treatable diseases. In 2003, for example, the WHO confirmed an outbreak of typhoid fever in Haiti that, because of a lack of access to doctors and safe water, led to dozens of deaths.

Haiti has the highest incidence of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) outside of Africa. Sex tourism and lack of health education led to the beginning of the epidemic in the early 1980s. Estimates vary, but the United Nations projects the national prevalence rate to be 4.5 percent of the population. Other estimates place the rate as high as 12 percent in the urban population and 5 percent in rural regions. Annually, 5,000 Haitian babies are born infected with the AIDS virus. The disease causes a fifth of all infant deaths and has orphaned 200,000 children.

Welfare: In addition to being the one of the world's most densely populated countries, Haiti is also one of the poorest. The annual per capita income is about US\$450, and most of the population (60 percent) faces underemployment. In recent decades, working and living conditions have been so poor that emigration, often by any means possible, has become a popular avenue of escape. About one out of every eight Haitians presently lives outside the country's borders.

The international community has donated heavily to the development of Haiti. Programs to feed, educate, and employ Haitians are funded by various international organizations. Since 1973, the

United States has been Haiti's largest donor. Between 1995 and 2003, the United States contributed more than US\$850 million to Haiti's development. It also pledged, in 2004, an additional US\$230 million in aid through 2006. Although monetary aid has temporarily eased suffering in Haiti, it has failed to significantly alter Haiti's developmental trajectory in the past.

Haiti has an underfunded and largely ineffective social insurance program. Employers are responsible for contributing between 2 and 6 percent of their employees' annual incomes to the social insurance fund. Because most Haitians do not have regular employers, however, this program neglects a large portion of the population. With similar limitations, Haiti has benefits for injured workers, the disabled, and pregnant women.

ECONOMY

Overview: Haiti's economy remains the least developed in the western hemisphere because of political instability, natural disasters, a lack of natural resources (especially arable land), and high population density. Job opportunities are extremely limited. Only one in 50 Haitians has a steady wage-earning job. Most Haitians survive through subsistence farming. In 2004 Haiti's gross domestic product contracted 3.5 percent from the previous year. Additionally, the country had the highest rate of inflation among all Caribbean countries.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): In 2004 Haiti had an estimated GDP (in terms of purchasing power parity) of nearly US\$12.1 billion. Although this figure topped some smaller Caribbean countries in total, Haiti's estimated per capita GDP (in terms of purchasing power parity) of US\$1,500 ranks last in the western hemisphere and 193rd in the world.

Government Budget: Haiti had a budget deficit of nearly US\$200 million in 2004, a total equal to about 60 percent of the year's government revenues.

Inflation: Purchasing power in Haiti has fluctuated dramatically throughout the past 15 years. Rising fuel prices and weak domestic demand, coupled with political instability, have produced nearly uncontrollable inflation at times. In 1994 the inflation rate reached 40 percent before an austerity policy and an influx of foreign aid brought the rate back under control. The inflation rate fell to a manageable 8.7 percent in 1999. However, exchange rate depreciation again pushed inflation to 40 percent in 2003. In 2004 the inflation rate held steady at an estimated 22 percent.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing: Although many Haitians make their living through subsistence farming, Haiti also has an agricultural export sector. Agriculture, together with forestry and fishing, accounts for about one-quarter of Haiti's annual gross domestic product and employs about 60 percent of the labor force. However, expansion has been difficult because mountains cover much of the countryside and limit the land available for cultivation. Of the total arable land of 550,000 hectares, 125,000 hectares are suited for irrigation, and of those only 75,000 hectares actually have been improved with irrigation. Haiti's dominant cash crops include coffee, mangoes, and cocoa. Haiti has decreased its production of sugarcane, traditionally an important cash crop, because of declining prices and fierce international competition. Because Haiti's forests have thinned dramatically, timber exports have declined. Roundwood removals

annually total about 1,000 kilograms. Haiti also has a small fishing industry. Annual catches in recent years have totaled about 5,000 tons.

Mining and Minerals: Haiti has a small mining industry, extracting minerals worth approximately US\$13 million annually. Bauxite, copper, calcium carbonate, gold, and marble are the most extensively mined minerals in Haiti.

Industry and Manufacturing: In 2001 manufacturing accounted for 7.9 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and industry as a whole for 16 percent. Less than 10 percent of the labor force works in industrial production. As a portion of the GDP, the manufacturing sector has contracted since the 1980s. The United Nations embargo of 1994 put out of work most of the 80,000 workers in the assembly sector. Additionally, the years of military rule following the presidential coup in 1991 resulted in the closure of most of Haiti's offshore assembly plants in the free zones surrounding Port-au-Prince. When President Aristide returned to Haiti, some improvements did occur in the manufacturing sector. Haiti's cheap labor brought some textile and garment assembly work back to the island in the late 1990s. However, these gains ultimately were undercut by international competition.

The leading industries in Haiti produce beverages, butter, cement, detergent, edible oils, flour, refined sugar, soap, and textiles. Growth in both manufacturing and industry has been slowed by a lack of capital investment. Grants from the United States and other countries have targeted this problem, but without much success. Private home building and construction appear to be one subsector with positive prospects for growth.

Energy: Haiti uses very little energy, about 250 kilograms of oil equivalent per head, per year. In 2002 Haiti produced 618 million kilowatt-hours of electricity while consuming 574 million kilowatt-hours. Most of the country's energy comes from burning wood. Haiti imports oil and consumes about 11,000 barrels per day, as of 2001. The Péligre Dam, the country's largest, provides the capital city of Port-au-Prince with energy. Thermal plants provide electricity to the rest of the country. Traditionally, the supply of electricity has been sporadic and prone to shortages—even with the country's low demand. Mismanagement by the state has offset more than US\$100 million in foreign investment targeted at improving Haiti's energy infrastructure. Businesses have resorted to securing back-up power sources to deal with the regular outages. The potential for greater hydropower exists, should Haiti have the desire and means to develop it. The government controls oil and gas prices, insulating Haitians, to an extent, from international price fluctuations.

Services: Haiti's services sector made up 57 percent of the country's gross domestic product in 2002. It employs 23 percent of Haiti's labor force. According to World Bank statistics, the services sector is one of the only sectors of Haiti's economy that sustained steady, if modest, growth throughout the 1990s.

Banking and Finance: Lack of a stable and trustworthy banking system has impeded Haiti's economic development. Banks in Haiti have collapsed on a regular basis. Most Haitians do not have access to loans of any sort. When reelected in 2000, President Aristide promised to remedy this situation but instead introduced a non-sustainable plan of "cooperatives" that guaranteed

investors a 10 percent rate of return. By 2000 the cooperatives had crumbled, and Haitians collectively had lost more than US\$200 million in savings.

Haiti's central bank, the Banque de la République d'Haïti, oversees 10 commercial banks and two foreign banks operating in the country. Most banking takes place in the capital city of Port-au-Prince. The United Nations and the International Monetary Fund have led efforts to diversify and expand the finance sector, making credit more available to rural populations. In 2002 the Canadian International Development Agency led a training program for Haitian Credit Unions. Haiti has no stock exchange.

Tourism: Not surprisingly, tourism in Haiti has suffered from the country's political upheaval. Inadequate infrastructure also has limited visitors to the island. In the 1970s and 1980s, however, tourism was an important industry, drawing an average of 150,000 visitors annually. Following the 1991 coup, tourism has recovered slowly. The Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) has joined the Haitian government in efforts to restore the island's image as a tourist destination. In 2001, 141,000 foreigners visited Haiti. Most came from the United States. Further improvements in hotels, restaurants, and other infrastructure still are needed to make tourism a major industry for Haiti.

Labor: Most Haitians do not have formal jobs. Unemployment and underemployment are rampant. Some estimates suggest that two-thirds of the country's 3.6 million workers are without consistent work. Many Haitians survive through subsistence farming rather than looking for jobs in the overcrowded urban areas. Legal protection does exist for those Haitians employed in the formal sector. Workers have the right of association and collective bargaining. Additionally, the labor code protects workers' unions from recrimination by employers. The country's minimum wage is 70 gourdes per day, equivalent to about US\$1.70.

In 2004, in cooperation with the World Bank, Haiti initiated the Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF) to improve schools and create new jobs. In July 2005, the joint committee overseeing the ICF announced that more than 10,000 new jobs had been created in the preceding year.

In addition to high unemployment, Haiti also lacks the skilled labor necessary to expand its economy. A brain drain has occurred, and many of the country's skilled workers leave Haiti for better economic opportunities abroad. Annually, thousands of Haitians cross the border to work in the factories of the Dominican Republic. The income they send back to Haiti is significant. Beyond the island of Hispaniola, political turmoil has resulted in many of Haiti's most valuable workers emigrating to the United States and Canada. The 500,000 Haitians living in New York City and the 380,000 in Miami represent a loss of training and expertise that Haiti has been unable to replace.

Foreign Economic Relations: The World Economic Forum ranked Haiti last in its 2003 Global Competitiveness Report. Thus, Haiti's role in the global economy often has been confined to receiving foreign aid. The United States has been the leading donor to development in Haiti and plays a vital role in Haiti's economy. Haiti does maintain active membership in a variety of multinational economic organizations, including the International Coffee Organization, Latin American Economic System, and Caribbean Community and Common Market. Haiti also is a

signatory to the Cotonou Convention—an economic community seeking to foster trade among African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries.

Imports: Haitian imports totaled nearly US\$1.1 billion in 2004. Total imports from the United States are nearly 10 times the value of imports from any other country. In 2002 Haiti imported US\$641 million worth of commodities from the United States. Other significant sources of imports include the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Japan. Haiti's primary import items are food, fuels (including oil), machinery, and manufactured goods.

Exports: In 2004 Haiti's exports totaled an estimated US\$338.1 million, with about US\$270 million of that revenue coming from exports to the United States. Other major export partners include the Dominican Republic and Canada. Assembled manufactures, coffee, edible oils, cocoa, and mangoes compose the majority of Haiti's exports.

Trade Balance: Haiti annually has a large trade deficit. In 2004 the country had a negative trade balance of nearly US\$662 million.

Balance of Payments: In 2003 Haiti's balance of payments was negative US\$4.6 million. Annually, Haiti's large trade deficit is partially offset by transfers received, including international aid.

External Debt: Haiti's total external debt surpasses US\$1 billion. In 2004 it reached an estimated US\$1.2 billion, an amount equal to one-third of its gross national product. Following the promising democratic election of Aristide in December 1990, many international creditors responded by canceling significant amounts of Haiti's debt, bringing the total down to US\$777 million in 1991. However, fresh disbursements of aid throughout Aristide's presidency swelled the amount of debt to more than US\$1 billion by 1999.

Foreign Investment: There has been very little foreign investment in Haiti over the past 20 years. Development aid and loans have been the only consistent source of outside capital. In order to encourage foreign investment, the government approved a 15-year "tax holiday" for all foreign businesses that invest in Haiti.

Foreign Aid: Between 1999 and 2004, no new foreign aid disbursements were made to Haiti because political instability made it unlikely that aid would be distributed properly. According to a World Bank report published in 2004, Haiti requires more than US\$1.3 billion in aid for 2005 and 2006. In July 2004, a donors' conference awarded Haiti more than US\$1 billion in pledged aid for 2005 and 2006. The United States pledged US\$230 million in aid through fiscal year 2006.

Currency and Exchange Rate: The Haitian currency is the gourde (HTG). In December 2005, the exchange rate was 42 gourdes per US\$1.

Fiscal Year: The Haitian fiscal year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30.

TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Overview: Public transportation, as it is understood in the United States, does not exist in Haiti. Most Haitians travel by private car, by bicycle, or on foot. There are about 36 vehicles per 1,000 inhabitants. The road system consists mainly of unmarked and unpaved roads. Local knowledge is necessary to traverse the country. Airports and ports serve the major urban areas.

Roads: Haiti's road system is plagued by insufficient funding and a harsh climate. Seasonal torrential rains ravage the roads that are in place. The U.S. Marines built much of the road network during their occupation (1915–34), and thus many stretches need extensive maintenance. Many of the country's bridges are no longer passable. Because road construction has been largely haphazard, no accurate mapping exists of Haiti's road network. At last count (1999), the country had 1,011 kilometers of paved roads and 3,149 kilometers of unpaved roads. Most paved roads surround and service Port-au-Prince, where about 85 percent of the country's traffic is reported to be. Traffic congestion can be extreme in urban areas.

No formal licensing or training program exists for Haitian drivers. Speed limits are posted on some roads, but the police rarely have the manpower to enforce them. Most roads do not have marked lanes or signs indicating the direction of traffic. Old and poorly serviced vehicles lead to frequent traffic accidents and blockages.

Railroads: Haiti has only a small system of privately owned railroad tracks serving the port regions of the country.

Ports: Port-au-Prince serves as Haiti's primary port for both cargo and passenger ships. The government currently owns and operates the port, but plans for privatization are under consideration. Tenders for privatization, however, have been pushed back repeatedly. The port at Port-au-Prince occupies nearly 15 hectares and has the service of a gantry crane capable of lifting containers up to 30 tons. Miragoâne and Cap-Haïtien are Haiti's other main ports for exports. Smaller ports at Petit Goâve, Gonaïves, Jacmel, and Port-de-Paix are also active. The county's smaller ports lack the modern machinery needed to handle heavy volume.

Inland Waterways: Haiti has fewer than 100 kilometers of navigable inland waterways. Most of the country's rivers and streams tend to be short and swift flowing because of the mountainous terrain and narrow peninsulas. All the rivers rise and fall significantly with seasons.

Civil Aviation and Airports: Port-au-Prince is home to Haiti's only international airport. Despite poor facilities, the United States Department of Transportation examined improvements and declared the airport in fulfillment of international safety standards in 2000. Only two years before, the same body had condemned the airport as unsafe. The small airport at Jérémie serves the domestic travel needs of the southwestern portion of the country. In total, Haiti has four airports with paved runways and nine with unpaved runways. Because of poor facilities at airports, helicopter travel has become an important tool for international forces serving in Haiti.

Pipelines: Haiti has no pipelines.

Telecommunications: Haiti has the lowest telephone density in the Caribbean. According to the International Telecommunication Union, Haiti has 270,000 phone subscribers. Its average of 3.25 subscribers per 100 inhabitants is far below the Latin American/Caribbean average of 34 subscribers per 100 inhabitants. Until recently, the Haitian government completely controlled the telecommunications industry. Most rural people, and many even in urban areas, did not have access to a reliable phone line. Haiti had about 130,000 phone lines in use in 2002.

Télécommunications d'Haïti (the state company—Teleco) allowed two new service providers to enter the market in 1998. They made reliable telephone service available at least to those who could afford it, providing both fixed and mobile wireless phone service. Consequently, the number of cellular subscribers in Haiti increased dramatically—to 300,000 by 2005. Although still expensive for most Haitians, cellular phones have extended phone service into rural areas of the country previously outside the fixed network.

Internet access has come slowly to Haiti. Initially, Teleco refused to give Internet entrepreneurs access to phone lines. Still, private companies worked to bring the Internet to the island. The country's first Internet café opened in 1997. In 2003 a U.S. company entered the market to provide broadband Internet service. Later that year, a state plan emerged to subsidize Internet connections for schools. Unfortunately, politics intervened, and the plan was halted before any real progress occurred. As of 2002, Haiti had about 80,000 Internet users, mostly the wealthy.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Political System: Haiti's constitution of 1987 established a parliamentary system of government that divides power among a president, who serves as chief of state; a prime minister, who serves as head of government; a bicameral legislature (the National Assembly); and regional assemblies. The aim of the constitution was to establish a stable democracy and to limit the power of the army in the political arena. Unfortunately, the assembly stopped functioning in January 2004 when the terms of all deputies and two-thirds of senators expired. No elections have been held since. It was former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, in an attempt to thwart his political adversaries, who decided not to call legislative elections in January 2004. Aristide resigned, amid rioting, on February 29, 2004. Interim President Boniface Alexandre, the former chief of the Supreme Court, who constitutionally succeeded Aristide, has ruled by presidential decree since taking office. The presidential election originally scheduled for the fall of 2005 has been postponed four times as a result of violence in the country.

Before 2004, elections occurred regularly to choose the president and all legislators, although violence and corruption frequently have compromised election results. Haiti traditionally has had a strong presidency. The president serves a five-year term and may not serve two consecutive terms. The cabinet, composed of the 15 heads of Haiti's federal ministries, advises the president, serving at his pleasure. The president shares power with the prime minister, who is nominated by the president and approved by the legislature. The 83-seat Chamber of Deputies and 27-seat Senate form the Haitian legislature, known as the National Assembly. Popularly elected deputies serve four-year terms. Senators enjoy a six-year tenure, with one-third of the body being elected every two years. Each department elects three senators to represent its interests in the national legislature. Members of both houses are directly elected and may serve consecutive terms.

The Supreme Court (or Court of Cassation) operates at the apex of Haiti's judicial system. At the lowest level, justices of the peace issue arrest warrants and mediate in minor disputes. Courts of the first instance hear cases deemed too serious or complicated to be handled by justices of the peace. Appeals from the courts of first instance go before one of the country's 30 appeals courts. The Supreme Court serves as the final arbiter on legal and constitutional questions. A separate court in Port-au-Prince handles labor issues.

Administrative Divisions: Haiti has nine departments: Artibonite, Centre, Grand' Anse, Nord, Nord-Est, Nord-Ouest, Ouest, Sud, and Sud-Est. Before leaving office, President Aristide signed a bill creating a tenth department, but the measure has been awaiting publication since November 2003 and thus has not yet become official law.

Provincial and Local Government: Below the federal level, Haiti has a complicated and decentralized system of regional and local governance. Haiti's nine departments are divided into 41 districts, which are further divided into 133 municipalities (called *communes*). Further dividing the municipalities, 565 communal sections (*sections communales*) exist—roughly equivalent to towns in the United States. Regular elections occur on each level. The communal sections elect a representative council; each of the municipalities elects both a three-member municipal council and a municipal assembly. At the department level, the democratically elected departmental assembly passes legislation, and the departmental council (chosen by the assembly) enforces it.

Judicial and Legal System: Haiti's constitution calls for an independent judiciary to interpret the country's laws, which are based on the Napoleonic Code. The criminal code dates to 1832, although some amendments have been made. The judiciary, like most of the government, has suffered from corrupting influences. Threats of violence often render judges and juries unable to make impartial decisions. Bribes not only sway judges but also taint potential witnesses. Haiti's inefficient and corrupt judicial system also has produced an overflow in the country's jails. Nearly 80 percent of incarcerated men and women still await their initial trial.

Electoral System: All Haitians 18 years of age or older have the right to vote. According to the constitution, elections should occur in Haiti at least every two years, to fill the presidency, legislature, or local offices. Violence, however, has made this schedule impossible since 2004, and at previous times in Haiti's history. Presidential elections are to be held every five years, but few presidents have reached the end of their term in order to have a peaceful exchange of power. Coups frequently have upset the electoral schedule. Elections to choose a new president and legislature were scheduled for November 2005 but have been postponed repeatedly because of violence.

Electoral law requires that legislative candidates receive more than 50 percent of the vote in order to win office during the first round of elections. If no candidate for a seat wins more than 50 percent, a run-off election occurs. Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council (Conseil Electorale Provisoire—CEP) oversees all electoral activities. It has not been above reproach or political tampering. In the May 2000 elections, for example, international observers found that the CEP, in certain cases, declared a first-round victory for members of the majority Lavalas Family

(Fanmi Lavalas—FL) Party when the candidates actually received only a simple majority of votes.

Politics and Political Parties: Many political parties, most of them small, function in Haiti. Some parties aspire to have broad influence but are unwilling to bend from their single-issue focus. Others exist merely as fronts for ambitious individuals. As is common in a parliamentary system, Haitian political parties form alliances and coalitions with other small parties. Some of these coalitions influence governance, but many crumble amid internal disputes. President Aristide's Party, Lavalas Family (Fanmi Lavalas—FL) still commands a large measure of support. A broad alliance of democratically minded parties known as the Democratic Convergence (Convergence Démocratique—CD) provides the most distinguishable opposition to FL. Other umbrella coalitions attempting to unite smaller parties include the Alliance for the Liberation and Advancement of Haiti (ALAH), Grand Center Right Front Coalition, and Haitian Greater Socialist Party (Grand Parti Socialiste Haïtien—GPSH).

Although the army disbanded in 1995, former military personnel remain a political force. Many former officers participated in the opposition movement that led to President Aristide's ouster. Similarly, the Roman Catholic Church continues to exert influence on the political scene. During the Duvalier dictatorship of the 1980s, political parties and trade unions were crushed, leaving only the Catholic Church to represent the interests of those oppressed by the government. Since that time, the church has become less political but remains a potential political advocate for opposition groups.

Mass Media: As in many developing countries, radio reaches the widest audience in Haiti. Estimates vary, but more than 300 radio stations broadcast throughout the country. Talk show programs serve as one of the few venues that allow ordinary Haitians to speak out about politics and the government. A law passed in 1997 declares the airwaves to be the property of the government, but at least 133 unlicensed radio stations operate freely. In addition, there are 50 community-based stations throughout the country.

Television and newspapers are available only to the richest and most educated Haitians. Two television stations serve approximately 42,000 households that have televisions. Satellite stations from foreign countries are available in Haiti, but only to those with the expensive equipment necessary to receive them. Haiti's three French-language newspapers have a total circulation of 20,000. There are no Creole-language papers.

Foreign Relations: Multinational organizations have long played a role in Haiti's development. Presently, United Nations (UN) peacekeeping troops operate in Haiti. In 2004 the UN Security Council authorized the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which provided troops and police personnel to Haiti for an extended duration. Additionally, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have funded many improvements in Haiti's economic infrastructure, education system, and health care network.

In large part as a result of its proximity, the United States has shown a prolonged interest in creating economic stability and functional democracy in Haiti. During its occupation of Haiti (1915–34), the United States Marines developed many laws and practices that still exist in the

country. The United States serves as Haiti's primary partner for both exports and imports and, in 1994, took an active role in restoring President Aristide to power. In 2000 President George W. Bush halted economic aid to Haiti when suspicions arose that Haiti's legislative elections had been illegitimate. Government aid from the United States to Haiti resumed in 2004.

Haiti's ties to its regional neighbors grew stronger during the 1990s. Relations with the Dominican Republic, which traditionally had been strained by border disputes and the perception that the Dominican police mistreat Haitian workers in the Dominican Republic, improved. A visit by President René Préval (1996–2000) to the Dominican Republic in 1996 was followed by a meeting between President Aristide (2000–4) and the Dominican president, Hipólito Mejía, in 2002. The countries agreed on a "free-trade zone" to provide jobs for Haitians and labor for Dominican companies.

Since 2000, trade has increased among all Caribbean countries. In 2002 the Dominican Republic was second only to the United States in trade with Haiti. Additionally, Haiti conducted significant trade with Trinidad and Tobago. In another significant step, Haiti achieved full membership in the Caribbean Community and Common Market (Caricom) in 2002. The organization fosters trade and diplomatic unity among Caribbean countries. Once again, however, political instability set Haiti back. After Aristide fled Haiti in 2004, Caricom refused to recognize Haiti's interim government because, in its view, the president had been ousted by the military. Finally, in 2005, responding to pressure from the United States, Caricom began normalizing relations with the interim administration of President Boniface Alexandre.

Membership in International Organizations: Haiti was an original member of the United Nations (UN). Haiti maintains that membership and supports many of the UN's specialized agencies. Haiti belongs to the International Labour Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Organization for Migration, World Health Organization, and World Trade Organization. Regionally, Haiti has membership in the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP Group), Inter-American Development Bank, Latin American Economic System, and Organization of American States (OAS). Haiti's membership in the Caribbean Community and Common Market (Caricom) was suspended following Aristide's resignation in 2004.

Major International Treaties: Haiti is a party to many significant treaties, including international agreements on agriculture, customs, genocide, human rights, intellectual property, labor, and nuclear non-proliferation. Concerning the environment, Haiti has signed treaties on biodiversity, climate change, desertification, law of the sea, marine dumping, marine life conservation, ozone layer protection, and pollution. Treaties to which Haiti has withheld support include agreements on biological weapons, chemical weapons, conservation, and gas warfare.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Armed Forces Overview: After years of military interference in politics, including dozens of military coups, Haiti disbanded its military in 1995. Haiti's National Assembly created a new civilian police with the help of the United States and the United Nations. Yet, as of 2004, there has been no official constitutional amendment to abolish the military. The UN Stabilization

Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has been authorized to complete the disarmament and demobilization of any remaining militias.

Foreign Military Relations: Without its own military, Haiti relies heavily on United Nations peacekeeping forces. Since it commenced operations in June 2004, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has had an authorized force of 6,700 military personnel and 1,600 police officers. The multinational force has been responsible for quelling riots and preparing for democratic elections. Before MINUSTAH forces arrived, a multilateral force made up of troops from Canada, Chile, France, and the United States helped stabilize the country under the interim leadership of President Boniface Alexandre.

External Threat: Haiti has no obvious external threats. Tensions have long existed between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, but the current border has been fixed since 1936. The presence and involvement of the U.S. military in Haiti would likely forestall any attack on the island.

Defense Budget: In 2003 Haiti's civilian security budget totaled an estimated US\$26 million.

Major Military Units: None.

Major Military Equipment: None.

Military Service: None.

Paramilitary Forces: None.

Foreign Military Forces: Originally set to withdraw from Haiti on June 1, 2005, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has remained in Haiti in order to secure the country for the elections planned for October and November 2005 but repeatedly postponed. For the period from July 2005 to June 2006, MINUSTAH has an approved budget of nearly US\$500 million. On June 6, 2005, the UN military force launched a coordinated series of operations against armed criminals in Port-au-Prince. Also, from February to May 2005, the United States Southern Command carried out a humanitarian mission in Haiti. Entitled "New Horizons 2005," the task force built three schools, drilled three wells, provided preventative health services to thousands, and set up temporary housing for orphaned children. Troops involved came from the U.S. Army, Air Force, Marines, and Navy.

Military Forces Abroad: None.

Police: The Haitian National Police (Police Nationale d' Haïti—PNH) has an estimated 2,000 personnel, as well as a variety of specialized units. Besides the temporary United Nations force, the PNH is the only security force in the country following the disbandment of the Haitian military. The PNH operates units dedicated to crime response (SWAT), crowd control in Port-au-Prince, and security in the Ouest Department. Additionally, a well-funded Presidential Security Unit exists. Although officially part of the police force, the Presidential Security Unit operates with its own budget and administration.

During President Aristide's second term (2000–4) political appointees took over many key positions in the PNH. In many instances, these appointees lacked security experience and compromised the political neutrality of the force. After Aristide fled the country, the interim president removed 200 corrupt and inexperienced officers in an effort to improve the PNH's effectiveness. New training ensued to teach police officers how to balance security and human rights concerns. Still, problems remain. Former military personnel have considerable influence with the police force, and some have begun to push for the reestablishment of the Haitian army.

Since its inception, the PNH has suffered from mismanagement, corruption, and a lack of funding. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has helped make up for the shortfalls of the PNH since it arrived in Haiti in 2004. Many security operations have been undertaken jointly by the PNH and MINUSTAH. Nevertheless, crime and violence are significant concerns in Haiti.

Internal Threat: Crime, militant activity, and economic and political instability are all internal threats in Haiti. Security forces rightly focus on these issues, rather than external threats. Amnesty International reports that the efforts of the United Nations (UN) and Haiti's police force have largely failed to curb violent crime in the country, especially in the capital region. The organization estimates that, in Port-au-Prince, an average of 100 persons per month were murdered in 2004. Additionally, Amnesty International asserts that perpetrators act with virtual impunity because the police and courts are corrupt and ineffective. In extending the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in June 2004, the UN Security Council called for 800 additional troops and 275 more policemen to reinforce security. As an additional testament to Haiti's problem with crime, the U.S. Department of State issued a travel warning for U.S. citizens in the country in May 2005. It warned of the potential for looting, blockades by armed gangs, and violent crime including kidnapping, carjacking, and assault. The U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince frequently has imposed a 5 p.m. curfew on its employees.

In addition to isolated incidents of violent crime, Haiti has a large organized crime network. Former members of the armed forces have formed armed brigades and claim that the interim government owes them remuneration for their role in ousting President Aristide. Drug traffickers also operate in the country. Haiti has become a major transit point for cocaine entering the United States and Europe. Officials in the United States estimate that 8 percent of the cocaine entering the United States travels through Haiti.

Lack of economic opportunity in Haiti has resulted in an exodus of the country's most educated workers (nearly 1 million of whom have settled in the United States). For those left in the country, crime and poverty have become nearly unavoidable facts of life. Political instability—the constant threat of a coup—has lessened the chance of the government's solving the nation's problems. Additionally, a legacy of political corruption and tainted elections has led to a pattern of violent political protest. In order for the lives of ordinary Haitians to improve, political stability must be achieved so that economic programs can take hold.

Terrorism: Haiti has no known terrorist groups operating within its borders. Although violence and crime are rampant, there have been no reported terrorist attacks in Haiti. The U.S.

ambassador to Haiti has called the political violence in the country the work of “terrorists” but only in reference to strongmen carrying out violence with the approval of Haitian politicians.

Human Rights: According to its constitution and written laws, Haiti meets most international human rights standards. In practice, however, many provisions are not respected. The government’s human rights record is poor. Political killings, kidnapping, torture, and unlawful incarceration are common unofficial practices, especially during periods of coups or attempted coups. Although the constitution mandates an independent judiciary and the right to a fair trial, prolonged pretrial detention remains a serious problem. Because the court system and its records are poorly organized, it is impossible to determine the percentage of prisoners being held without trial.

The constitution guarantees freedom of speech and the press, and the government generally has respected these rights. Many journalists, however, practice a measure of self-censorship in order to protect themselves from retribution. During the second Aristide administration (2000–4), some reports contend that members of the press were killed for supporting opposition movements. The government does not censor radio, television, or the Internet. Because demonstrations often turn violent, security forces frequently have ignored the constitutionally mandated right to assembly and organization. The Haitian government generally has respected religious freedom in the country.

Haiti’s constitution does not contain specific language prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, sex, language, age, or disability. Although some working standards exist to protect women, few resources exist to ensure enforcement. Abuses against women and children are common. Rape, although illegal, rarely results in prosecution of the perpetrator. Haitian law excuses a husband for murdering his wife if the wife is found in an adulterous affair. Wives do not enjoy the same right. The Haitian government contains a Ministry of Women’s Affairs, but it also lacks the resources to address issues such as violence against women and harassment in the workplace. In addition to suffering from chronic malnourishment and a lack of educational opportunity, many Haitian children also suffer physical abuse. In 2004 the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs reported that its hotline received more than 700 calls from children reporting abuse. Few statistics regarding the wider problem of child abuse have been collected. Trafficking of children also is a significant problem. UNICEF estimates that 2,000 to 3,000 Haitian children per year are trafficked to the Dominican Republic.